

The Story Page.

Jamie Blake, Poet.

"What now, Jamie?" asked Mrs. Blake, as Jamie passed through the kitchen with his pencil and pad of writing paper.

"I'm going to write something," answered Jamie. Mrs. Blake stopped rolling pie crust, and looked at him in surprise. "What are you going to write?" she queried.

"Poetry."

"Poetry? What put it into your head to write poetry?" "Oh, I don't know," said Jamie. "I just feel like writing some poetry; that's all."

"Don't you feel a bit like weeding the strawberry bed?" asked his mother. "I was hoping you would get that done this morning."

"I think I'll have time to do that, too," he answered. "I don't think it will take me long to write my poetry."

Mrs. Blake resumed her baking, but she kept casting furtive glances at her little son. He had settled himself in the kitchen doorway industriously sharpening his pencil. When that was done he placed his pad on his knee, and sat gazing out into the back yard. Then he wrote a little on the pad. When he had read over several times what he had written, he tore off the sheet, crumpled it into his pocket, gave a few more touches to the sharpening of his pencil, and began all over again. Evidently he was having no easy time of it, and his mother smiled as she watched him. His pencil annoyed him terribly; it had to be resharpened every minute. And every time he sharpened it he began his poem over again on a fresh sheet of paper. Finally he looked around and caught his mother smiling at him. "Are you laughing at me?" he inquired, himself laughing.

"Why, no, I don't think I was, unless I was laughing to think what a fine thing it would be to have a great poet in the family," she returned.

"I don't know as I am very much of a great poet," said Jamie, surveying his pad critically. "I can't find the name of any animal that will rhyme with 'woods.' Can you think of any?"

"I don't believe I can," said Mrs. Blake, slipping a pie into the oven; and she added, "I am no poet at all; not the least bit of a one."

Pretty soon Jamie tore off another sheet and put it in his pocket, and laying aside his paper and pencil he walked slowly toward the garden. "I am going to weed those strawberries now," he called back to his mother. The weeding kept him busied until dinner time.

It was while she was clearing up the dinner table that Mrs. Blake asked Jamie to let her see his poetry. Jamie took a crumpled leaf from his pocket, and smoothed it out slowly. "It isn't very good," he said, looking sideways at his mother, "and I don't know as I want to show it to anybody."

"Oh, do let me see it," she pleaded.

"There is only two lines of it," he said as he handed it over to her. "I didn't get any further. I couldn't think of the name of an animal that rhymed with woods."

These were the two lines:

Whiz, whiz, goes the arrow through the woods;
It strikes the bear and the deer."

"That is pretty poor, isn't it?" he asked, after his mother had read it over.

"I am afraid it is," she assented, trying to look very doleful. "But I see that you weeded the strawberries just splendidly," she added quickly and with a smile. "All the poets and wise men in the world could not have done it better; I doubt if they could do it as well. There is a lesson in that you might take to yourself. See if you can think it out," she said as she disappeared into the kitchen. When she came back, Jamie was sitting on the dining room sofa, reflecting.

"I guess I know what you mean," he said. "You mean that I had better do things that I can do well, and not be trying to do things that I can't do at all."

"That's it," said his mother, and she again disappeared into the kitchen with her hands full of dishes. When she returned he was still there, and evidently he had been doing some more deep thinking.

"That would be a good thing for old Mr. Smith to know, wouldn't it. Then if he would stop trying to make flying machines, and tend to his farm, he would be better off."

"Exactly," said Mrs. Blake, laughing merrily. "You had better go and tell him so."

Jamie picked up his hat, and went out into the front yard. He was thinking very seriously of what his mother had said only in a joke. He had heard his father and others say that Smith was letting his place go to rack and ruin, while he himself was pursuing some visionary fancy. Now that his mother had mentioned it, he began to think that Smith ought to be told about it. He had the whole of that Saturday's afternoon to himself. There was nothing to hinder; so he set out across the fields towards Smith's place. It was not very far away, and he was soon there. He had not made up his mind as to the exact words he would use in opening the subject, but he

felt sure that they would come to him when he was ready for them.

As he came around the corner of Smith's barn, he saw Smith himself, with some strange looking things hanging from his shoulders, standing on the low bridge that led to the big barn doors. Smith saw him almost as soon, and cried out excitedly, "Hello, Jamie Blake. I was just wanting somebody to help me. Come here, and hold onto this kite."

Jamie's eyes followed up the kite string to where the kite was sailing in the air; such a royal, big kite that he promptly forgot what he had come for, and rushed over and grasped the string, or, perhaps, more properly, kite rope; for it was a heavy twine, doubled, and almost as large as a rope. It was hitched once around a stake, else it might have pulled Jamie off his feet, for it was a very large, strange looking kite, without any tail; and it stood straight up over our heads, not off to the side, as all the kites had done that Jamie had ever seen.

"Ain't that a buster of a kite?" asked Smith, noting Jamie's admiring gaze. "I made it after a plan in the Scientific Journal, and it will lift more than fifty pounds." All the while, he was busy with the things that he had fastened to his shoulder, which the boy knew must be one of the flying machines that he had heard about. There was a pair of cloth wings, resembling the wings of the butterfly in shape, and a great many stout wires were attached to wings at different points, and also to two flat sticks which Smith was fastening to his arms and wrists with straps.

"Are you going up in the air to fly the kite?" asked Jamie.

"No," said Smith. "The kite is to help me rise. And when I have risen I'll wind up the cord, and fasten the kite to this stick where it will act as a sail. Now I am most ready. When I get those wings up you hand me the cord, and see that the end of it is clear of the stake."

Smith laboriously raised the wings of his flying machine until they looked like great sails on each side of his body. Jamie was about to hand him the kite cord when a brisk gust of wind struck the big wings with such force as to cause the man to lose his balance, so that he tottered uncertainly for an instant on the edge of the bridge. As he lost control of himself he made a great swoop with one of his wings, and a wire caught Jamie at the back of the neck; and man, boy, flying machine and all went off the bridge and down among the long weeds in a tangled mass. Neither one of them was hurt at all, but something very unexpected happened just then.

A little black hen had been nestling her brood of chicks in the weeds under the edge of the bridge; and one of the sails of the machine fell flat upon her. She wiggled out from under it with an angry squall, just as Jamie was scrambling to his feet. The cries of the imprisoned chickens lashed her to fury, and ruffling her feathers, she came at Jamie like a bomb shell; lighting on his shoulders, on his head, everywhere; striking with her feet, beating with her wings; as he remarked afterward, "the air seemed full of feathers." Jamie tumbled over backward, and then got up and fled. The black hen did not follow him, for her chicks were calling in the opposite direction. Spying Smith vainly trying to get out, she promptly pounced upon him. The poor fellow was so tangled up in his flying contrivance that he could not defend himself, and the enraged hen waltzed up and down the prostrate body of the inventor, now and then getting in a good dig with her sharp beak.

Finally he managed to pull a sail over his head for protection; and by that time, Mrs. Smith, a woman as practical as her husband was visionary, appeared on the scene. She had the hen under a basket in a jiffy and Jamie sat on the basket while she unstrapped her husband, exclaiming as she did so: "You'll kill yourself Si; I know you'll kill yourself!"

"I wouldn't had a scratch if it hadn't been for that old hen," he insisted stoutly.

When he was freed, Jamie tipped the basket over, and the little black hen spread her wings and sailed gracefully over the fence to where her chickens were huddled in a group, chirping mournfully.

"My, she can fly, can't she?" said Jamie.

"Yes," said Smith with just a trace of dejection in his voice, "she can fly, the pecky thing." And he added shaking his head gravely, "I expect to fly before I die." Jamie went home and told his mother all about it, and she laughed till the tears rolled down her cheeks.

"And after all that fuss, the last thing he said was, 'I expect to fly before I die,'" concluded Jamie.

"Did you notice that that was poetry?"

"Poetry?" he exclaimed, "why so it is," and he repeated it.

"I expect to fly
Before I die."

"How funny things are fixed in the world," he continued. "Mr. Smith wants to fly but he can't, but his old black hen can fly just as easy. And he don't want to make poetry but he can without trying to. And I want to make poetry, and I can't, but—" he paused for breath, and his mother finished the sentence for him.

"But you can fly, for I have seen you," she said. "So now, fly around and get things straightened up for Sunday."—Selected.

In Earthen Vessels.

By J. W. WEDDELL, D. D.

This friend of mine has been telling me of a work of grace in the Master's name. I am touched and lifted by it. But the man who was the instrument in God's hand for the marvelous doing. Alas! just a word and a shake of the hand. It is enough; we understand each other. No, he has not gone wholly wrong, he is a Christian still, but the life has not tallied with the gracious deed, you would not associate his name with it today. And then as I turn away, my heart a bit burdened with the thought of it, there comes this truthful, helpful scripture now: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." (2 Cor. 4:7).

How often I have to say it in extremity and also in extenuation! The treasure, it is very glorious; it is heavenly. The vessel—well, the most we can say and the least—it is earthly, at times very earthly. But then I remember that the "excellency" is to be "of God." Here at the mint, the ingots of gold look bright and shining. This is true excellency and glory. But yonder in the hills I recall the rough uncomely earth and quartz of the refractory ore. The vessel earthly, but it carried treasure.

I see the disciples about the Master. They have gotten something of the heavenly grace into their souls. Then I hear them calling down fire from heaven or seeking place in the kingdom. Yes, even after Pentecost, shutting up the kingdom for a season to themselves and their own, and I say, and it wonderfully clarifies one's judgment in the matter, "we have the treasure in earthen vessels."

Old Israel, fed of manna, followed by the Rock, beckoned by a land flowing with milk and honey, yet crying out against God and God's chosen men, and desiring looks of Egypt and the idols of the nations; and this newer Israel preserved from a Nero and yet in the dark ages giving back to Nero's cruelty and murder toward the loyal and the lowly; and in our own day at times sitting in ease and comfort (while thousand perish for food), or shutting themselves up to the cushioned fastnesses of our modern sanctuaries, while the great multitude goes stumbling toward the pit, unchecked, scarcely warned. O brothers, indeed we bear this treasure in "earthen vessels." God forgive us!

I look upon those about. They often fail us, often grieve and disappoint. Yet, behind and beneath it all, some good in every man, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." The vessel earthen, but some treasure there. Oh to see things as Jesus saw them. By the pool side, there at the well-curb of Samaria, out among publicans and sinners. Earthen vessels, but heavenly treasure. And for that treasure, its uplift and redemption, he gave himself. Yes, into an earthen-vessel that could be moved, and shattered and broken, he put himself and the unspeakable treasure of his own life that he might save such as are we. Wonderful condescension! He made himself of no reputation, he took upon himself the form of a servant, he that was equal with God—treasure in earthen vessels indeed! And when they put the nail through hand and foot and pressed the spear to the side, they hurt, grievously hurt the vessel, but the treasure, that was secure, committed as it was to God who judgeth righteously.

And who but hath this same word to speak in meek penitence and confession as he considers himself: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." So many things done amiss; so many things left altogether undone; so few words well spoken, so many wrongly; so little likeness to the Master, so much of the world and the flesh. Ah me! We have this treasure in earthen vessels, earthen still in spite of the glorious treasure.

Well, this we can do. We can discriminate and discern. With the spiritual-mindedness of 2 Cor. 2, we shall resolutely exalt the heavenly treasure above the earthen vessel. In others we shall try to see more the heavenly than that which is of the earth; in ourselves we shall care more for the soul than for the body, though not careless of either. "And people tell us that the race for whom our missionaries are thus giving their toil, their talents, their life, is a decaying race, and that in fifty years not one of them will be left—that (you know who it is that is speaking—Henry Drummond.) That I consider the noblest example of the sacrifice of Christ." Be like him.

And this also we will do. We will try to cleanse the vessel more and more, and fit it to its burden as celestial treasure. Not a jewel in a swine's snout, but apples of gold in pictures of silver. We will do this for our own sakes. The little boat that went down in the night under the great ocean ship, had its light burning; but the lamps had been unintended, and had grown smoky and dim. For self-protection we must cleanse the vessel that it may send out a clear, bright light. And for the sake of others too. The Chinaman, you remember, said he had not heard the gospel before, but he had seen it. And then he told of one of his neighbors, changed by God's

grace from profligacy to piety. The world knows except as it is seen. Keep it bright.

And this for every day, this vessel, this man, changed: I trust more into his inner life when, body, soul, and less, the earthen vessel, so as to be meet for the throne of grace, and it is by means of the sanctified that the

"Jesus
Wilt
Became
O Lamb
Davenport, Iowa

Secretary Stanton
army officer had re-
events, had not ob-
"I believe I'll go
Lincoln, "and give
"Do so," said M
have it in your mi-
Stanton did not
bone-crusher that
"That's right,"
"Whom can I ge-
"Send it!" repli
send it at all. Tear
on the subject, and
it up. You never
do."—Sel.

Stanton did not
bone-crusher that
"That's right,"
"Whom can I ge-
"Send it!" repli
send it at all. Tear
on the subject, and
it up. You never
do."—Sel.

Stanton did not
bone-crusher that
"That's right,"
"Whom can I ge-
"Send it!" repli
send it at all. Tear
on the subject, and
it up. You never
do."—Sel.

The

"What would
To the teak-wood
The teak-wood
To the little k
"I believe," s
In the crack,
"Just so this p
How little it's
It was long, lo
They found the
And it said, as
"Now I'll be g
But the little k
For there was
And the old bo
But the place i

Taking T

Anne and Ruth can
morning in a state of
"O papa," said Ann
and dressed, and their
and we do wish you'd
"Well," said papa
they'd promise to sit
"Papa!" said Ruth
They have to smile, 'c
that way."

So papa took down
camera with its three
eye, and carried it into
There, in a prim little
the doll house, sat all
whose eyesight had giv
of her; Maria Estella,
a "normous hat with
and Delia, the black ru
with flaxen hair and
gilded clothes-pin call
black-headed china doll
wire poking out at thei
Papa got all ready to
"Now, Sophronia, d
blind old dolly, "sit
move. Horace, you s
Estella, keep those pla
eyes. And, if you lit
where papa's got his b
see a yellow birdie co
very hard. Guess we'r
And Sophronia and M
and Horace's lips were
so much as to wink. A
as hard as ever they cou
came out. And the pic
ton L. Waldo, in The Cl

A new pair of shoes ca
He was delighted with
his feet. Then he exclai
they're so tight I can't
Round Table.